

May 6, 2014

# Helping Parents Prepare Their Child & Their Relationship For A Second Baby

Presented by:  
Rhona Berens, PhD, CPCC

Facilitated by InJoy Birth and Parenting



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## Webinar Experience and Handouts

- <http://injoyvideos.com/sibling-preparedness-webinar>

The screenshot shows the InJoy website interface. At the top, it says 'InJoy Empowering educators and health professionals.' Below that is a navigation menu with 'PRODUCTS', 'COMPLETE SOLUTIONS', 'EDUCATOR RESOURCES', 'ABOUT INJOY', and 'CONTACT US'. A search bar is also visible. The main content area features a 'Free Webinar Series' section with the title 'Helping Parents Prepare their Child and Their Relationship for a New Baby' presented by Rhona Berens, PhD, CPCC on May 6, 2014. It lists the time as 2:00 pm (EDT) / 1:00 pm (CDT) / 12:00 pm (MDT) / 11:00 am (PDT). A small photo of a family is shown. A 'Download Now' button is present, and a red circle highlights a 'DOWNLOAD OUTLINE' button.

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## Rhona Berens, Ph.D, CPCC Coach. Speaker. Writer. Advocate.

- [rhona@parentalliance.com](mailto:rhona@parentalliance.com)
- [www.parentalliance.com](http://www.parentalliance.com)
- [www.youtango.com/experts/rhona](http://www.youtango.com/experts/rhona)
- *Serving parents & the professionals who support them.*



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### Objectives

- Provide an overview of existing research on the impact of a second child on their older siblings, on parents' relationships with their firstborn children, and on parents' relationships with each other.
- Present a range of tools that parents can use with their firstborn children, and with each other, to better prepare family members for a new child, and to prevent or minimize negative responses as much as possible.



Included among the tools is Gerald Newmark's 5 Critical Needs, as explored in the InJoy DVD series, *How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children.*



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### #1 Tip For Parents

# Normalize the “good” and the “bad.”



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### Normalize:

- An increase in relationship conflict & persistent problems.



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**Normalize:**

- Parent concerns about greater workload & stress of 2<sup>nd</sup> child.



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**Normalize:**

- Kids' ambivalence or outright hostility about:
  - Having to share their parents, esp. mom, with a baby.
  - Having to share toys, a room, etc.
  - Having to adjust to a new member of the family.
  - Being asked to welcome someone they don't necessarily want to welcome.



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**Great Book:**

Jennifer Bingham Hall's  
*Beyond One*



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**Research On Individual Happiness:**

- On average, baby #1 makes both moms and dads happier.
- Baby #2 has no effect on dads' happiness and a negative effect on moms' happiness.



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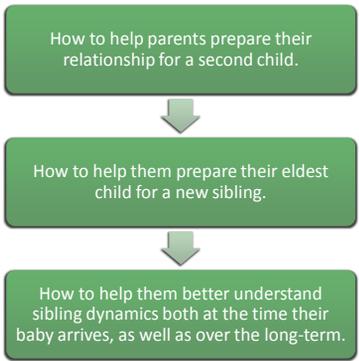
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**Our Focus Today Will Be On:**



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**How To Prepare A Relationship For Baby #2:**

**“The birth of a second child commences the most difficult year in a relationship.”**  
- Jennifer Bingham Hull



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**Research On Baby #1:**

- Drop in relationship satisfaction.
- Persistence of, or increase in, poor communication patterns & recurrent problems.
- Increase in conflict frequency.



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**Research On Baby #1 (continued):**

- 2/3 less alone time with spouse.
- Division of labor expectations, as compared to outcomes, predict mom's relationship satisfaction.



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**Research On Baby #1 (continued):**

The most important factor impacting a couple's relationship when they become parents:

**The quality of their relationship before their baby was born!**



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### Research On Baby #2: Impact On Moms

- In contrast to baby #1, after which most working moms returned to paid work, 50% go to part-time or take a leave of absence after baby #2.
- Parents, especially moms, are often shocked by how much more work is created by a second child.
- The extra workload can increase moms' stress levels, as dads often don't pick up half the labor.




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### Helping Couples Help Themselves:

- What worked well for us? How has our teamwork been effective?
- How can we build on what's worked well?
- What's been stressful about our teamwork (or our lack of teamwork)?
- Even if we disagree *and* give each other the benefit of the doubt, how can we better handle new baby stresses?




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### Helping Couples Help Themselves (continued):

- How can we, as a team, prepare for the added stress and demands of a new baby?
- How might we avoid or reduce some of that stress?
- After the baby arrives, how do we want to be with each other if/when we're stressed individually and as a couple?




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**Helping Couples Help Themselves (continued):**

Every change, whether desired or unwanted, requires us to adjust to that change.

**HELP COUPLES ACKNOWLEDGE REAL OR IMAGINED LOSS**



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**Rhona's "Best Of" List:**

- Read books together about having a new baby sibling.
- Get a baby doll and play games, practice diapering, etc.
- Emphasize "dos" and "don'ts" with infants (focus on "dos").
- Revisit eldest child's infancy in photos/videos/memories.
- Maintain scheduling consistency, whenever possible.
- Encourage questions pre- and post-birth. Anticipate questions.
- Describe birth plan in broad strokes.
- Encourage involvement in preparations & preserve individuality.
- Embrace resistance &/or regression.
- Carve out alone-time with eldest & list advantages.
- Come from love & don't make promises you can't keep.



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**Managing Concerns About Children's Wellbeing:**

- Children's personalities have the greatest effect on their reaction to a new sibling; that effect is more important than their birth order.
- Children's developmental stage can sometimes impact their reaction.
- Family stress can have an adverse effect on older child's reaction.
- Sibling rivalry, tension &/or discontent is normal.



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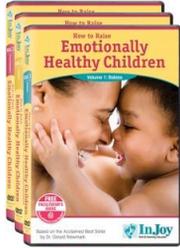
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**Children's 5 Critical Needs:**

**MEET KIDS WHERE THEY ARE,  
NOT WHERE PARENTS WANT THEM TO BE**

- 1) The need to feel INCLUDED.
- 2) The need to feel RESPECTED.
- 3) The need to feel IMPORTANT.
- 4) The need to feel ACCEPTED.
- 5) The need to feel SECURE.



AVAILABLE IN SPANISH




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**Other Ways to Meet Children's Emotional Needs:**

- Avoid (or self-manage overt) favoritism.
- Treat children fairly (which doesn't mean the same).
- Honor differences.
- Do not label or assign "roles" (he's *such* a boy, she's *such* a girl, the comic, the caregiver, the smart one).
- Avoid comparisons.
- As children age, don't assume all conflict is bad or requires intervention.




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**Sibling Dynamics & Research:**

- About 80% of kids in Western nations have at least one sibling.
- The sibling relationship is likely to last longer than all other relationships.
- Sibling interactions are often strong and emotionally uninhibited.
- Sibling relationships are intimate.
- Sibling relationships vary according to individual differences.




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**Sibling Dynamics & Research (continued):**

- Sibling rivalry and sibling conflict are normal.
- Sibling conflicts, especially when kids are young, are quite frequent.
- Avoid taking sides in conflicts, even if parents choose to intervene.
- Not intervening → kids learn conflict resolution skills.
- Intervening → most effective if parents help kids strategize.




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**Sibling Bullying:**

**“The line between healthy relations and abuse is crossed when one child is consistently the victim of another and the aggression is intended to cause harm and humiliation.” (Dr. John V. Caffaro)**




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**Sibling Bullying (continued):**

- Sibling bullying is destructive & warrants immediate intervention.
- If going on for some time, seek professional help (therapist, counselor).
  - To ensure the child who has been bullied receives support.
  - To reduce chances of that child experiencing depression or other challenges, e.g., acting out at school.




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**Siblings Across a Lifetime:**

- Over time, sibling rivalry and power imbalances tend to subside.
- In adulthood, and especially late adulthood, anywhere from 78%-95% of siblings report positive relationships with each other.
- Sisters report most positive relationships with each other (but also most conflicted).




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**Gifts From Rhona Berens:**

Email [rhona@parentalliance.com](mailto:rhona@parentalliance.com) for these gifts:

- 1) Helping Families Transition to Baby #2 Exercise.
- 2) Research Reference/Resource List for this presentation.
- 3) Coupon/s for a complimentary 60-minute phone or Skype strategy session for an individual or a relationship.

NB: Coupons are transferable, "unlimited," and can be distributed to clients/patients at your discretion.




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**Thank you!**

- Thank you, Rhona!
- Please visit <http://www.parentalliance.com>




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**Special Offer – Final Thoughts**

- Special Offer for those who listened live.
- Watch for our next webinar on:  
"What Men Need During Labor: Isn't it Time We Cared?" with Amy Gilliland
- Need a certificate of attendance? Attached to your handouts!
- Questions? Email [webinar@injoyvideos.com](mailto:webinar@injoyvideos.com)
- Short survey
- Check our Facebook page for more important offers



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## InJoy Birth and Parenting

Hereby states that

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Completed the webinar program:

### **Helping Parents Prepare Their Child and Their Relationship for a New Baby**

Presented by Rhona Berens, PhD, CPCC on May 6, 2014.

This webinar was the equivalent of one contact hour of continuing education.

*Debbie Young*

Debbie Young, LCCE, CD(DONA), PCD(DONA), BPT(DONA)